

# Best and Worst Developments of the Bay Area:

Nine counties, eighteen projects,  
and a platform for livable communities



Working together for a sustainable  
and socially just Bay Area

The Transportation and Land Use Coalition (TALC) is a groundbreaking partnership of more than 90 groups working to maintain our region's renowned high quality of life, achieve greater social equity, and protect our natural environment. TALC's members believe that current development patterns do not have to be our destiny. Instead, the region can refocus public investment to serve and revitalize existing developed areas; design livable communities where residents of all ages can walk, bike, or take public transit; provide effective transportation alternatives; and develop affordable, transit-oriented housing that contributes to vibrant and diverse communities.

(TALC was formerly BATLUC, the Bay Area Transportation and Land Use Coalition)

## **Acknowledgments**

Rachel Hiatt and Josh Widmann did the vast majority of the research and writing for *Best and Worst Developments of the Bay Area*. Stuart Cohen, TALC's Executive Director, managed the overall project. Seth Schneider, assisted with final editing, layout and graphics.

The report could not have been done without the collaboration and contributions of TALC members. They are the ones who suggested Best and Worst examples in their counties, and who helped decide among multiple nominations.

The greatest assistance came from the staff of Greenbelt Alliance, which continues to be at the forefront of the effort to save valuable open space in the Bay Area. Great debt is also owed to Doug Shoemaker at the Nonprofit Housing Association of Northern California, whose passion for greater affordable housing in the Bay Area is truly contagious.

We also thank all of the developers who won the best awards, for creating housing and mixed-use projects that are truly a showcase, and for their assistance – as well as the assistance of city planning officials – in obtaining photographs and other details about these projects.

## **Additional Copies**

Additional copies of *Best and Worst Developments of the Bay Area* can be downloaded for free from TALC's website, or by sending a \$10 check (for black and white copy, color copies are \$20) payable to "Transportation and Land Use Coalition" to the address below.

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## Introduction

In 1998, member groups of the Transportation and Land Use Coalition (TALC) implored the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to initiate a regional “Smart Growth Visioning Process.” TALC’s goal was, and is, to break the self-fulfilling prophecy of sprawl, whereby we predict sprawl will take place on the far suburban fringe of the region then subsidize that development with billions of dollars of transportation and other infrastructure and investments. This process continues even as our regional agencies project that this cycle of sprawl will leave our region much worse off in 25 years!

It took two years to get funding for the Smart Growth visioning project then, during 2001 and 2002, citizens and elected officials have worked with five regional agencies, plus stakeholders from environmental, business and social justice organizations, to develop a new vision of how the region will grow.<sup>1</sup>

A main theme during the visioning-process workshops in each of the nine Bay Area counties, and a recurrent theme in growth conversations, is that there is no single definition of Smart Growth. Indeed, appropriate development for a small town in Solano County will look very different from appropriate development for a lot adjacent to an Oakland BART station.

To make our ideas about Smart Growth more tangible, TALC members suggested that we review projects, and highlight positive developments, that help meet the Smart Growth goals listed below.

- Revitalize existing developed areas without displacing local residents
- Create livable communities with housing near jobs, recreation, transit, and services
- Provide real transportation choices
- Preserve open space
- Address the affordable housing shortage

The best growth in each county highlights those projects that support these principles. Because of the dire housing shortfall in the Bay Area, all of the best for this year either contain, or are exclusively, housing.

Other members felt that despite the growing number of good developments, poorly planned growth is still the norm, and its negative impact needs to be highlighted. Thus, we also sought out the worst projects in each county. These developments range from a “big box” retail proposal near a BART station to a ridgetop development that destroys habitat and makes travel by anything but automobile nearly impossible. These worst developments remind us of the critical need for region-wide support for the Smart Growth Vision and a workable plan to implement the vision’s goals.

TALC’s search for the best and worst developments in the Bay Area began with recommendations from individual members, as well as from leading member organizations. TALC representatives and staff then reviewed the projects. Although the winning projects vary widely, all adhere to multiple basic principles of Smart Growth.

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<sup>1</sup> MTC, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), Bay Area Air Quality Management District, Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission were the regional agencies. The Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Communities officially co-sponsored the process.

# Moving Towards Smart Growth

The final product of the Smart Growth vision was adopted by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) in March 2003. Called *Projections 2003*, it puts forward, for the first time, a vision of Bay Area growth that is not a mere extrapolation of current trends and projections. Instead, it expresses a desire for a “network of neighborhoods” that anticipates that growth will begin to focus, as it used to, in downtowns, neighborhood centers, and along public transit lines. While a step forward, these projections were a compromise between the “vision” that came out of the public process and the status quo of sprawl.

To move away from current trends, *Projections 2003* predicts that the region and state will implement new policies that foster smarter patterns of growth. Yet there is still little agreement on what exactly those policies should be; a regulatory approach to growth brings many quick opponents – and even incentives can be controversial, as there will typically be winners and losers.

The platform below is a menu of key strategies for implementing this vision. It was developed by leading environmental and social equity groups over the past year at meetings of the Transportation and Land Use Coalition (TALC) and its Board of Directors and from dialogues with leading groups, such as Greenbelt Alliance, Urban Habitat, Urban Ecology and Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California.

This is not meant as a comprehensive list of every Smart Growth policy. Rather it represents a priority list, with initiatives and policies that have a real chance of passing over the next two to three years. This platform will be transmitted to state elected leaders, regional agencies, and members of other stakeholders, such as the business community, to help identify areas of overlapping interest. Organizations and individuals can sign on to these recommendations on TALC’s website at [www.transcoalition.org](http://www.transcoalition.org).

## *1. Give Cities Incentives for Smart Growth*

- a) Incentives for housing, not big-box retail: Allow jurisdictions to retain a greater percentage of property taxes raised locally in exchange for keeping a lower percentage of sales taxes. (AB 1221)
- b) Adopt county or regional sales tax sharing system that spreads the benefits of job and housing growth across those jurisdictions which face the costs of that growth.
- c) Establish a regional “Smart Growth Zone Incentive Fund” to reward cities that adopt policies consistent with Smart Growth criteria. Funding for planning and capital can initially come from regional transportation funds, and could be expanded with state or county funds.
- d) Dedicate funds to help communities plan growth that works best for them. Specifically, MTC should fund community planning processes focused on revitalization and Smart Growth.

## *2. Provide Affordable Places to Live*

- a) Adopt 20% inclusionary zoning policies in all Bay Area jurisdictions.
- b) Adopt jobs-housing linkage fees in all Bay Area jurisdictions.

- c) Reform construction defect liability laws to protect homeowners, while reducing liability exposure faced by developers of multi-family housing.

### *3. Provide Transportation Choices*

- a) Raise regional bridge tolls by \$1 to pay for public transit (SB 916).
- b) Finalize and fund the Lifeline Transit Network to remove barriers to work, child care and health for low-income families.
- c) Establish regional funding within MTC for bicycle and pedestrian planning and improvements.
- d) Require that regional transportation funds to Bay Area jurisdictions based on specific Smart Growth criteria in order to implement the "Network of Neighborhoods" Smart Growth alternative, which emerged from the Smart Growth Vision workshops.
- e) Pass a regional gas tax that prioritizes funding for transit operations.

### *4. Protect Open Space*

- a) Adopt Urban Growth Boundaries in all Bay Area jurisdictions
- b) Permit city land annexations only when infill development opportunities have been exhausted. This would be achieved by reforming Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) rules to require LAFCo certification of a city's infill performance before a land annexation is permitted.
- c) Establish entities to acquire and manage open space acquisition in Bay Area counties. (A current example is the East Bay Regional Parks District).

### *5. Invest in Existing Communities*

- a) Prioritize state school infrastructure funds to favor school construction in already developed urban and suburban core areas. Also, prioritize funding for schools that can serve multiple functions – such as community centers, which can reduce commuting.
- b) Lower the voter threshold to 55% for bond and sales tax measures that fund a combination of housing, transportation, and open space protection. (SCA 11 and ACA 14)
- c) Require state agencies to comply with AB 857, passed in 2002, by prioritizing investments that promote environmental sustainability and social equity.

# Best of Alameda County

## *Transit-oriented development provides housing adjacent to BART*

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The Benton provides an excellent example of how a suburban city can provide significantly more housing in its existing urban footprint. The development – directly adjacent to the Fremont BART station – provides 322 units of housing, of which 64 units are affordable, and retail shops and services on the ground level. The Benton also helps improve downtown Fremont’s pedestrian environment: it connects to the city’s civic center and library and offers pedestrians a walkway to easily access the BART station. This development is a strong start towards realizing the potential for

transit-oriented development outside the county’s older urban core.

### New housing and retail near BART



*Photo by Dan Marks*

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## Project Details

### **Status:**

Completed in spring 2003. Now partially occupied.

### **Location:**

Civic Center Drive (between Stevenson Blvd. and Walnut Ave.), Fremont

### **Developer:**

SunAmerica, Inc.

### **Architect:**

Podd Associates (Phoenix, Arizona)

### **Density:**

31 units/acre

### **Land Use:**

The Benton includes retail area (over 15,000 square feet) and 322 housing units (350,000 square feet), of which 64 are affordable and 17 are live-work lofts..

## Worst of Alameda County

*Proposal would locate car-oriented "big box" store near regional transit center*

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The site of a proposed Wal-Mart store in Fremont is valuable land less than half a mile from the future Warm Springs BART station. Giant retail stores, such as Wal-Mart, generate a high volume of single-driver cars and trucks. In contrast, the *Warm Springs District Specific Plan* – developed with input from the City of Fremont and BART planning staff – calls for the creation of pedestrian-friendly housing, retail and office uses near the Warm Springs station. The proposed Wal-Mart meets none of these objectives. The Skyway Court site would be better used for transit-oriented office or housing (it is sufficiently separated from the impacts of the NUMMI auto plant – such as noise or odors). The massive investment of more than \$600 million to extend BART to Warm Springs is a regional investment, and with it comes responsibilities to the region. For example, it has meant that other projects, such as BART seismic improvements, will not be funded as quickly. In addition the low transit ridership that will be a consequence of placing auto-oriented retail, such as Wal-Mart, near the station will mean that the ongoing operating subsidy for the extension will be

higher. This will have to be borne from BART's operating budget, to be paid for disproportionately by non-Fremont riders. Massive regional investments such as BART extensions can only be justified by placing transit-oriented developments near the station.



*The bottom X indicates the future BART station, the top is the approximate location of the proposed Wal-Mart.*

*Source: Mapquest*

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### Project Details

#### Status:

The project was unanimously rejected by the Planning Commission, but has been appealed to the City Council.

#### Location:

Skyway Court at Osgood Road, Fremont

#### Size:

156,000 square foot store

#### Take Action:

Call Mayor Morrison and the City Council – at 510-284-4090 – and urge them to reject the Wal-Mart project at the proposed site.

# Best of Contra Costa County

*Development provides amenities to residents while remaining affordable*

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It is not often that residents of affordable housing enjoy amenities like a large children’s play area or a swimming pool, but the residents of the Coggins Square homes are an exception. That is because the Iron Horse Lofts and Coggins Square in Walnut

Creek blend market-rate and affordable-housing units in the same project. Located adjacent to the Pleasant Hill BART station and the Iron Horse bike/hiking trail, Coggins Square and the Iron Horse Lofts provide easy access to sustainable transportation.



*Photos by David Baker + Partners Architects*



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## Project Details

**Status:**

Completed

**Location:**

Las Juntas Way at Coggins Drive, Walnut Creek

**Developer:**

BRIDGE Housing Corporation (Coggins)  
Holliday Development (Iron Horse)

**Architect:**

David Baker + Partners Architects

**Density:**

55 units/acre (Coggins)  
27 units/acre (Iron Horse)

**Land Use:**

Coggins Square includes 87 affordable family apartments. The site is shared with 54 market-rate town homes in the Iron Horse Lofts development.

# Worst of Contra Costa County

## *Giant sprawl development threatens green space in Antioch*

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The massive Future Urban Area #1 development (known as FUA-1) would allow a handful of developers to create a sprawling development on 2,700 acres of green space in South Antioch. Currently open space and ranch land, the area contains a creek and is directly east of the Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve. It is home to a variety of rare species, including the endangered San Joaquin Kit Fox and the threatened California Red-Legged Frog. Development of FUA-1 would devastate their habitat. As planned, the sprawling FUA-1 would create 5,000 units of primarily luxury housing, a golf course, and a business park, and would generate over 140,000 daily car trips. Finally, by extending roads, sewer and water lines further outward, FUA-1

would put tremendous growth-inducing pressure on rural lands to the south of Antioch, threatening to open up even more open space to sprawl.

### Threatened open space in Antioch



*Photo copyright 2002 by Richard Rollins*

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## Project Details

### **Status:**

Although the environmental review for FUA-1 has been put on hold, the application to develop the area is still active with the City of Antioch. In short, FUA-1 has been delayed, but the 2,700 acres of green space are still threatened by development.

### **Location:**

South Antioch

### **Developers:**

Richland Development, Cowan Development, Robert Nunn

### **Size:**

2,700 acres

### **Take Action:**

Volunteer with Greenbelt Alliance's campaign to save FUA-1. Contact Eli Buchen at 925-932-1773.

# Best of Marin County

## *Edgewater Place fills affordable housing gap*

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Housing – especially affordable housing – is in short supply in Marin County. The Edgewater Place development in Larkspur demonstrates that affordable housing and award-winning design need not be mutually exclusive. Edgewater Place is developed on property purchased from an adjacent market-rate housing development and

exceeds the city’s inclusionary housing requirements by a factor of four. The development is adjacent to bicycle paths, allowing for convenient access to shops and schools. These characteristics earned the development the Sierra Club’s nomination as one of the fifty best examples of Smart Growth in the United States.



*Photos from EAH Housing*



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### **Project Details**

**Status:**

Completed in 1991

**Location:**

26 Edgewater Place, Larkspur

**Developer:**

EAH Housing

**Architect:**

Hooper Olmstead and Hrovat

**Density:**

14 units/acre

**Land Use:**

Residential, 28 affordable housing units

**Other Awards/Recognition:**

Nominated by the Sierra Club as one of the fifty best examples of Smart Growth in the United States

Design awards from the American Institute of Architects and the Western Red Cedar Association

# Worst of Marin County

## *Housing sprawls up a hillside*

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Bounded by Highway 101 to the east and Lucas Valley Road to the south, the Oakview Master Plan would develop 106 acres on two parcels of land. To the south and west, the plan would permit 28 single-family detached units – each on a sizeable lot – that would tear into and grade the hillside. Marin has been a leader in preserving its open spaces, and needs to stay true to this legacy while working to increase housing with more compact design. One positive change with this development is that the second parcel, located along Highway 101, was recently changed from an auto-oriented office park to an assisted-living center that will help deal with the coming population growth of seniors.

### Areas threatened by Oakview Master Plan



*Housing would be built in the central parcel, an assisted living center would be placed in the parcel on the right.  
Source: Mapquest; highlighting by Joshua Widmann*

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## Project Details

### Status:

The Planning Commission has recommended certification of the final EIR, and it is expected to conduct a merits hearing in June. The final hearing before the Board of Supervisors on the EIR and merits of the project will likely occur in July.

### Location:

North of Lucas Valley Road and west of Highway 101, Marinwood

### Developer:

Daphne/Boccacio

### Size:

106 acres (includes 28 housing units and a 94,400 square-foot assisted-living facility)

### Take Action:

Contact the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors, in care of Thomas Lai, Principal Planner, by fax at 415-499-6292 or email at [tlai@co.marin.ca.us](mailto:tlai@co.marin.ca.us). Express your concern about the environmental impacts of the 28 units.

## Best of Napa County

### *Stonebridge locates housing near open space, community college*

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The Stonebridge housing development in St. Helena provides housing that is affordable to low-income and very low-income families, while providing access to facilities that strengthen the community fabric. The development was built to help address a deficiency of affordable family units in the area. Stonebridge includes a community center with after-school and social services, as well as green space oriented towards the families that live there, with access for the surrounding community: a soccer field, community gardens, and a children's play area. In addition, Stonebridge is located near

Napa Valley Community College, providing accessible, affordable housing for college students with families and making it easier for residents to take night classes.

#### Outdoor amenities and affordability



*Photo from EAH Housing*

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### Project Details

#### **Status:**

Completed

#### **Location:**

990 College Avenue at Pope Street, St. Helena

#### **Developer:**

EAH, Inc. and Napa Valley Community Housing

#### **Architect:**

Hooper Olmsted and Hrovat

#### **Density:**

15 units/acre

#### **Land Use:**

Residential with 80 affordable units. Very low-income families at or below 35% of median income occupy 42% of the units, with the balance reserved for low-income families.

## Worst of Napa County

### *Bottling facility squeezes out endangered species*

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Beringer Blass Wine Estates, owned by the Foster's Group of Australia, plans to build the largest structure in Napa – 1.4 million square feet – and develop 115 acres of vineyards. This construction, accomplished by filling in seven vernal ponds, will threaten an endangered species (the Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp) by replacing the natural pools with artificial ones. The new, larger facility could introduce a host of environmental problems, including surface runoff, watershed destruction, and native-habitat loss. At a minimum, the facility could be located in the Central Valley, where most of the grapes will be grown. This would reduce the environmental impacts from transportation, instead of trucking the grapes all the way to Napa.

### Bottling facility threatens environment



*Red highlighting indicates the proposed development.  
Source: Mapquest; highlighting by Joshua Widmann*

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### Project Details

#### **Status:**

The project has been challenged on environmental grounds by a Sierra Club lawsuit and is currently in the appeals process.

#### **Location:**

South of the Napa Airport in the city of Napa

#### **Developer:**

Beringer Blass Wine Estates

#### **Size:**

115 acres; 1.4 million square foot building

#### **Additional Information:**

The project threatens a federally-protected endangered species and will triple Napa County's wine production.

#### **Take Action:**

The project has been challenged by a lawsuit. For more information, contact John Stephens at 707-251-0106.

## Best of San Francisco

### *Curran House replaces parking lot with much-needed housing*

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Housing is desperately needed in San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood. The Curran House replaces a small parking lot with 67 affordable apartments, gardens, common space, and neighborhood-serving retail shops. The project will have no parking of its own; parking facilities would have added several million dollars to the cost of the development, decreasing its affordability. Furthermore, the location is well served by transit, and monthly parking is available for lease in the immediate neighborhood. Additionally, Curran House will create new urban green space; it will have an entry garden and a landscaped courtyard in the rear of the building. Financed by the Mayor's Office of Housing, the building will add architectural interest – with its out-of-the-ordinary design elements

– to an otherwise bland city block. The project truly contributes to San Francisco's goal of a transit-first city and has been endorsed by a number of community organizations.

#### Attractive high-density housing



*Drawing by David Baker + Partners Architects*

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### Project Details

#### **Status:**

Groundbreaking scheduled for November 2003

#### **Location:**

Taylor Street at Turk, San Francisco

#### **Developer:**

Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation

#### **Architect:**

David Baker + Partners Architects

#### **Density:**

223 units/acre

#### **Land Use:**

Residential with ground floor retail (1,381 square feet); 67 affordable-housing apartments, including studio, 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom units

#### **Other Awards/Recognition:**

Endorsed by SPUR Housing Action Committee, Urban Ecology, City Car Share and Walk San Francisco

## Worst of San Francisco

### *Parking garage proposal needs improvement*

---

UC Hastings College of the Law still plans to build a massive parking garage at the corner of Golden Gate and Larkin streets. The project made headlines in spring 2002 when residents and community groups protested the original 885 space garage in a transit-rich neighborhood that needs housing more than new parking. The proposed site is within walking distance of some of the best transit service west of the Mississippi and at the edge of the Tenderloin, the neighborhood with the lowest rate of car ownership in San Francisco. The Tenderloin also suffers from the highest rate of pedestrian injuries in the city, another reason that traffic generating uses like parking need

to be minimized. Hastings withdrew its original garage proposal and convened a blue-ribbon panel, but the two alternatives currently being considered at the site still provide too much parking and not enough housing: both alternatives include between 400 to 650 parking spaces and from 40-80 units of housing at the site. According to Transportation for a Livable City this proposal “added insult to injury because the site is the former home of three residential hotels and Hastings’ declared parking demand is overstated because they still provide subsidized parking to their employees and students.”

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### **Project Details**

#### **Status:**

Two alternatives are currently under consideration by a blue-ribbon panel. But Hastings has signaled that they are open to further improvements.

#### **Location:**

Golden Gate and Larkin, San Francisco

#### **Developer:**

UC Hastings College of the Law

#### **Size:**

400-650 parking spaces and, at most, 80 units of housing at the site

#### **Take Action:**

Contact Hastings’ Chief Financial Officer, David Seward, at 415-565-4710 or [sewardd@uchastings.edu](mailto:sewardd@uchastings.edu) and explain the importance of building more housing and less parking at the site. For more information go to [www.livablecity.org](http://www.livablecity.org)

# Best of San Mateo County

*Housing developments bring life to the core of Foster City*

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Metro Center and CityPark are “infill” projects built on two vacant parcels of land sandwiched between a shopping center, an office building, and a small park. The CityPark market-rate townhouses and Metro Center affordable senior apartments demonstrate how infill development can introduce new vitality to an urban core while beginning to address the county’s housing shortage. To its credit, the city wanted a higher density solution for the site and waited until the right proposal came along, instead of settling for an inferior project.

## Housing revitalizes city core



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## Project Details

### Status:

Completed

### Location:

100 Village Lane and 101 Town Center Lane, off Hillsdale Boulevard near Metro Center Drive, Foster City

### Developer:

BRIDGE Housing Corp. and Foster City Redevelopment Agency (Metro Center), Regis Homes of Northern California (CityPark)

### Architect:

Seidel/Holzman Architects (both projects)

### Density:

39 units/acre (average for both projects)

### Land Use:

Market-rate townhomes (42 2- and 3-bedroom units), affordable senior housing (60 apartments), and a public park

### Other Awards/Recognition:

California League of Cities, Redevelopment Project Merit Award, 1998

San Mateo American Institute of Architects, Honor Award, 1998

National Association of Home Builders, Project of the Year Award, 1997

Pacific Coast Builder’s Conference, Gold Nugget Grand Award: Best in the West – “Best Infill Site Plan”, 1997

## Worst of San Mateo County

*"Big box" retail inappropriately located near major transit hub*

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The new Costco in South San Francisco is little more than a five-minute walk from the soon-to-be-opened South San Francisco BART station. Taking up 15 acres, it is a car-oriented "big box" retail store with huge parking lots. This flies in the face of a primary reason to invest in heavy rail like BART: to allow more development in urban areas without generating significant levels of new traffic. Given the nature of the store's large inventory, Costco's customers are unlikely to utilize BART. With fewer riders than possible using the new station, the public subsidy for BART operations will be higher. Who is on the hook for this subsidy? Samtrans, the county's bus operator. So

besides being a wasted opportunity for transit-oriented housing and offices, Samtrans will almost certainly have to slash bus service if BART ridership is less than phenomenal.



*The Costco parking lot (foreground) is a little over ¼ mile from the new BART station (indicated by the arrow).*

*Photo by John Reed*

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### Project Details

**Status:**

Completed and open

**Location:**

1600 El Camino Real at Hickey Boulevard,  
South San Francisco

**Developer:**

Costco

**Size:**

15-acre site, 147,000 square feet warehouse

# Best of Santa Clara County

## *Mixed-use development will build transit ridership*

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Vendome Place in San Jose represents smart investment along a transit corridor. The development (formerly called Taylor Towers) clusters housing and services in the most appropriate place – near a light rail stop. The increased density of activity provided by Vendome Place will improve transit ridership on the VTA light rail system, as well as provide convenience and access to downtown and job centers. Additionally, 20% of the project’s housing units are affordable. These factors earned Vendome Place the Sierra Club’s endorsement. This transit-oriented project is badly needed to demonstrate that the way to

get more workers to Silicon Valley jobs is through smart transit-oriented development – not by building the proposed “Pombo” Freeway through the Mount Hamilton Range.

### Housing and services clustered near transit



*Drawing from Barry Swenson Builder*

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## Project Details

### Status:

Groundbreaking scheduled for mid-2003

### Location:

Taylor Street at North 1st Street, San Jose

### Developer:

Barry Swenson Builder

### Architect:

Berger/Detmer Architects

### Density:

134 units/acre

### Land Use:

Market rate and affordable residential development (400 units) with some commercial use (7,000 square feet)

### Other Awards/Recognition:

Endorsed by the Sierra Club, the Housing Action Coalition, the Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group, Japantown Business Association and the Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce.

## Worst of Santa Clara County

### *Office sprawl ignores adjacent transit service*

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The completion of Cisco campus sites 4 and 5 along the Tasman West light rail line marks Santa Clara County's worst development in recent years. Known as "Cisco City" to some, site 4 sits on 160 acres of former agricultural land. The development places auto-oriented sprawl near the Champion light rail station (circled towards the top of the photograph). Cisco could have clustered the buildings close to the station and to each other. Instead, the site is a disorienting pedestrian environment that encourages auto use, and does little to boost the low ridership along the struggling Tasman West line.

#### Parking lots dominate Cisco campus



*The red circle at the top of the photo denotes the Champion light rail station, surrounded by low-density Cisco buildings. Aerial photograph by Stuart Cohen/Chris Augenstein, © 2002*

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### Project Details

#### **Status:**

Sites 4 and 5 have been completed

#### **Location:**

San Jose (site 4) and Milpitas (site 5)

#### **Developer:**

Cisco Systems, Inc.

#### **Size:**

160 acres; 3.3 million square feet of campus-style offices

#### **Additional Information:**

Site 4 generates about 26,400 daily car trips; the project affects 17 local intersections that operate at Level Of Service (LOS) D at peak hours; 11 freeway segments affected by Site 4 are already operating at LOS F (the worst level of traffic congestion).

## Best of Solano County

*Delta Cove brings inner urban waterfront areas to life*

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Delta Cove, in Suisun City, contributes to the revitalization of a historic waterfront. This live-work development of single-family homes concentrates housing in an already-urbanized area. The project's "live-work" designation allows for limited commercial activity in the homes, such as a professional office, retail sales, or a service sector business. Ten of the units have detached apartments, which can be rented separately, thereby increasing the housing density. Delta Cove redevelops an abandoned waterfront site, contributes to its

preservation and begins to bring the historic downtown back to its former glory.

### Live-work options on the waterfront



*Photo by Martin Nelis, City of Suisun City*

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### Project Details

#### **Status:**

9 units completed, 14 under construction

#### **Location:**

Kellogg Street at Cordelia Street, downtown Suisun City

#### **Developer:**

Miller-Sorg Group

#### **Architect:**

Dahlin Group

#### **Density:**

9 units/acre

#### **Land Use:**

23 homes, all "live-work," single-family, and market-rate

## Worst of Solano County

### *Sprawl threatens critical open space*

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Lagoon Valley – which was annexed by Vacaville in 1990 – is critical open space at risk from sprawl development. Lagoon Valley is widely recognized as open space of regional significance. Its value as a community buffer is extremely high as it is the last remaining undeveloped valley between the cities of Fairfield and Vacaville. Besides its beauty and tranquility, the valley’s open space holds high value as a watershed, natural habitat, and recreational area. The development proposed by Triad Corporation would sprawl 1,277 luxury homes and a golf course across 730 acres. One million square feet of office and commercial space would be placed on an additional 80 acres. Lagoon Valley is geographically separated from the rest of Vacaville and would leave residents and workers with no practical choice but to drive to meet their daily needs. Its low densities eat up more open space than necessary.

There is still an opportunity to preserve Lagoon Valley as open space. Vacaville should promote growth within the existing city on vacant and underutilized land, rather than paving over this valuable land.

### Upscale housing threatens open space



*Red highlighting indicates the proposed development.  
Source: Mapquest; highlighting by Joshua Widmann*

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## Project Details

### **Status:**

The City Council has authorized an Environmental Impact Review (EIR) for the proposed project but has not yet approved amendments to the General Plan needed for the development to be built.

### **Location:**

Southwest Vacaville

### **Developer:**

Triad Corp.

### **Size:**

840 acres; 1 million square feet of office and commercial space, 1,277 housing units

### **Take Action:**

Get involved with Greenbelt Alliance’s campaign to save Lagoon Valley. Contact Natalie DuMont at 707-427-2308 or [ndumont@greenbelt.org](mailto:ndumont@greenbelt.org).

## Best of Sonoma County

*Cotati CoHousing creates dense housing, preserving small town feel*

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The Cotati CoHousing project exemplifies smart, small-town development. Located along Cotati's main street, the project extends the pedestrian-oriented nature of the downtown. Many residents are within a few miles of their workplaces; a number of residents will have no commute, as their places of business will be located in the on-site commercial space. Located within walking distance of neighborhood services (grocery store, restaurants, shops), the



*Photo by SoCoHo, LLC, 2002*

project is among the highest-density housing in the city of Cotati. Pedestrian paths on the site connect surrounding neighborhoods with the downtown. During the day, parking is shared with commercial-space tenants. Attached, clustered housing preserves open space on the site, which, combined with the project's rural design elements, is clearly consistent with Cotati's small-town atmosphere.



*Photo by The CoHousing Company, 2003*

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### Project Details

#### **Status:**

Under construction; move-ins will occur in July and September 2003

#### **Location:**

Old Redwood Highway at Page Street, downtown Cotati

#### **Developer:**

Ross Developments, the development company, is made up of the residents (SoCoHo LLC), The CoHousing Company (an architecture and project management

company in Berkeley) and Wonderland Hill Development Company, Colorado.

#### **Architect:**

Chuck Durrett of the CoHousing Company

#### **Density:**

15 units/acre (net)

#### **Land Use:**

The Cotati CoHousing project incorporates 30 housing units and 7,500 square feet of commercial space on 2.34 acres of land. The commercial space fronts on Old Redwood Highway, Cotati's main street.

# Worst of Sonoma County

## *Ridgetop development visible throughout Santa Rosa*

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Fountaingrove II is a large, expensive housing development that sprawls atop the Fountaingrove hills in northeast Santa Rosa. Although Santa Rosa's General Plan includes language meant to protect against ridgetop development, the ordinance was poorly written and vague, allowing this hilltop project to be approved on the basis of a technicality. Houses in the development – many painted in bright hues, and priced between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 – are visible from throughout Santa Rosa. In addition to the environmental and visual impacts, Fountaingrove II is entirely market rate with no provisions for affordable housing; the entire development also has no transit connections. The project's master plan – which includes several subdivisions –

was approved a number of years back, giving developers free rein to continue construction, and leaving concerned citizens with little recourse to demand the inclusion of affordable housing.

### Atop the hills in Santa Rosa



*Photo copyright 2002 by Peeter Vilms*

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## Project Details

### **Status:**

About 75% completed

### **Location:**

Northeast Santa Rosa, along the Fountaingrove Parkway

### **Developers:**

A large number of development companies have been building the homes and subdivisions in Fountaingrove II.

### **Size:**

When completed, Fountaingrove II will include about 550 units. The eastern half of the development is almost entirely built out, the western part is about halfway completed.

### **Take Action:**

There is little that can be done today to stop the completion of this project. For more information on Fountaingrove II, contact Concerned Citizens for Santa Rosa at [aeseley@sonic.net](mailto:aeseley@sonic.net) or [gorins@sonic.net](mailto:gorins@sonic.net).

